

REMARKS

STATUS OF CLAIMS

Claims 1-12 are pending.

Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Bunny (US Patent No. 6,446,112).

New claim 13 is added.

Thus, claims 1-13 remain pending for reconsideration, which is respectfully requested.

No new matter has been added in this Amendment. The foregoing rejection is hereby traversed.

PRIOR ART

BUNNY

Bunny discloses using nicknames more than nine characters when communicating with an IRC server (column 25-45). In particular, Bunny discloses sending a command from a user terminal to a converting means together with a sender address, which can have more than nine characters. The sender address is converted into a code with a maximum number of nine characters. Then an IRC command is sent to the IRC server together with the code having a maximum number of nine characters (e.g., column 1, lines 52-58).

The Examiner appears to assert that generally Bunny's chat 39 proxy for IRC server 40 is provided for name translation, additional security and additional services, including the present invention's profile creation (column 10, line 39 to column 11, line 24). For example, Bunny discloses that a plurality of addresses can be assigned to one user, in which each address can be used to associate profiles to the user (column 9, lines 34-40 and column 10, lines 24-49). Further, Bunny discloses that supplemental chat room attributes can be provided by prompting the user to supply the attributes, which are available from the chat proxy 39 server, by issuing a command to the proxy 39 server (column 11, line 63 to column 12, line 7). More particularly, Bunny discloses that processes in the system automatically create and maintain a user profile database on the server, as a result of specific user action (column 3, lines 22-31, and column 4, lines 10-14).

However, the present claimed invention differs from Bunny, as follows:

Although the present invention provides a benefit of creating a user profile based upon a specific user action, the claims do not solely recite this benefit, but the claims expressly recite a particular type of user action, namely a user profile based upon a user's conversations in the virtual conversation space (i.e., a user profile based upon contents of the user's messages submitted in the IRC). In other words, the claimed invention monitors a conversation in a virtual conversation space based on a categorized keyword, and a user profile is created based upon the conversation monitoring (i.e., as recited in claim 1, "providing predetermined keywords and predetermined categories such that the keywords and categories are correlated to each other; identifying a category that corresponds to a keyword if the message exchanged within the virtual space contains the keyword" (emphasis added)). Bunny is absolutely silent on the present invention's, "identifying a category ... if the message exchanged within the virtual space contains the keyword; and storing the identified category such that the category is correlated to a user" (using claim 1 as an example).

In other words, for example, Bunny, column 10, lines 24-67, discloses using a user's address label as a representation of a certain behavior. Although the user address label can represent a certain behavior, such representation would be a rough representation compared to the present invention's user behavior determined based upon the contents of the messages submitted by the user, which has a benefit of likely providing a more accurate behavior representation. For example, the present invention allows designating a URL to a category, and if a user mentions the URL in a chat message during a chat, a certain behavior can be associated with the user by mentioning the URL. For example, if the web site at the URL has been associated with hobbies, the user likes hobbies. Otherwise, if the web site at the URL has been deemed as harmful or forbidden, a harmful attribute would be associated with the user. See, for example, page 14, lines 15-23, and page 16, lines 8-14. In contrast to the present invention, Bunny only contemplates using a user's address as a representation of a certain behavior.

Bunny does not contemplate creating a user profile based upon the contents of messages transmitted by the user, because there is no discussion of message monitoring anywhere in Bunny. None of the disclosure lines in Bunny referred to by the Examiner disclose or suggest, "identifying a category that corresponds to a keyword if the message exchanged within the virtual space contains the keyword" (emphasis added). Therefore, the claimed invention is patentably distinguishing over Bunny, because the system of the present invention

correlates a category to a chat user based upon the contents of the messages transmitted by the user (i.e., the claimed invention monitors a conversation in a virtual conversation space based on a categorized keyword, and a user profile is created based upon the conversation monitoring).

The present invention has a benefit of providing a user with information about a person to whom the user is about to talk based upon messages transmitted by the person, for example, prior to initiating conversation in a virtual space. In the present invention, a user profile is created based on keywords contained in a message transmitted by the user, such as a URL as the keyword (see, e.g., page 14, line 15 to page 15, line 4; and FIG. 2 of the present Application). In contrast to Bunny, the present invention as recited in independent claim 11 provides, "correlating predetermined keywords with predetermined personal interest and characteristic categories; managing a personal interest and characteristic category of a user according to a keyword in a message transmitted by the user within a virtual conversation space ..., based upon the correlating; and providing message-attribute-based virtual space services to users in the virtual conversation space according to the managed personal interest and characteristic category of the user."

Regarding benefits of the claimed invention, using the message-based (conversation-based) user profile created according to the present invention has a benefit of providing services based on user message data (i.e., services based upon message attribute data) as follows:

- 1) inviting a user categorized based upon the user's conversations to a channel, or to send a message to such a user;
- 2) create a friend list, category by category based upon users' conversations;
- 3) display users in a channel, category by category based upon the users' conversations;
- 4) restricting chat participation of a user based upon the message-based user profile of the user as follows: restricting creation of a channel or entry to a channel by a user with a high rating information, restricting a number of users with a high rating information to join, restricting invitation of user with a high rating information to a channel, and restricting messages of users with a high rating information. For example, when a user mentions a harmful URL in messages from the user, a harmful message level of the user is increased and used to allow or not allow the user to participate in a chat (see, e.g., page 17, line 21 to page

18, line 3, of the present Application).

The examples of services that can be provided based upon user message data (i.e., based upon keywords included in user messages) are explained in page 29, line 5 to page 34, line 10; and page 35, lines 2-20, of the present Application. Therefore, in contrast to Bunny, the essence of the claimed invention is to obtain information about a user in a network conversation system, such as a chat system, according to messages transmitted by the user in virtual spaces of the network conversation system (i.e., the claimed invention monitors a conversation in a virtual conversation space based on a categorized keyword, and a user profile is created based upon the conversation monitoring).

Regarding the rejection of dependent claim 5, Bunny does not mention the phrase "rating" in the disclosure lines referred to by the Examiner in page 5 of the Office Action. For example, Bunny, column 3, lines 29-31, discloses: "user profile can be used filter searches, so that the results of a keyword search can be ranked according to preferences suggested by the user profile." However, ranking a search according to a user profile differs from the present invention's "rating of a user" (claim 5). In other words, the present claimed invention rates a user based upon the user's conversation in the virtual conversation space. More particularly, regarding Bunny, column 9, lines 35-56, column 10, lines 39-67, column 11, lines 1-24, lines 63-67, and column 12, lines 1-7, which is relied upon by the Examiner, Bunny cannot rate a user based upon the user's conversation behavior in the chat rooms as a strength indicator of the behavior, but Bunny can only provide a characteristic based upon the user's address label or a chat room attribute.

New dependent claim 13 is a method claim drawn to the present invention's user rating process, which is also recited to dependent claim 5, and is patentably distinguishing over Bunny by rating a user based upon the user's conversation in a virtual conversation space, which is monitored based upon a categorized keyword. New dependent claim 13 provides:

13. (NEW) The method of claim 11, further comprising:
 - rating the user according to the managing of the personal interest and characteristic category of the user based upon the message transmitted by the user; and
 - providing the rating to the users as one of the message-attribute-based virtual space services.

Support for dependent claim 5 and new dependent claim 13, can be found, for example, in page 17, line 21 to page 18, line 4, of the present Application.


CONCLUSION

In view of the remarks, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-12, and allowance of claims 1-12 and new claim 13 is respectfully requested.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

Respectfully submitted,
STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 3/30/2004

By: 
Mehdi D. Sheikerz
Registration No. 41,307

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501